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ACUPUNCTURE AS A REMEDY FOR RHEUMATISM.

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FEW diseases are reported to be cured by a greater variety of remedies than Rheumatism, and few are subject to greater disappointment in the attainment of the expected results. This arises principally from the circumstance, that Rheumatism is of a two-fold character, tonic and atonic, requiring the closest discrimination in treatment, as the remedies proper for each form are diametrically opposite in their action.

The detail of all the remedies for Rheumatism would occupy much space, and convey little new information. My present object will be, to give my experience in the use of one remedy, in my opinion not sufficiently appreciated. It was about six years since, after reading the practice of Churchill, Cloquet, and others, I was induced to try this remedy on my patients, in cases apparently suited to it, and, for the sake of brevity, I will give a sketch of a few of these cases.

Case I. I saw an old negro woman, the gardener of one of my friends, limping at her work, who, on inquiry, stated that she had Rheumatism of the knee. I had not at that time tried acupuncture, but feeling disposed to make the experiment, told her in a jocular manner, that I could cure her with a needle; to this she was extremely averse, fearing the pain, but after some persuasion consented. Having fitted the larger end of two slender needles into small phial corks, I kept the skin of the inner surface of the knee tense with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and introduced them to a moderate depth with a slow, alternate, semi-rotary motion. As their points entered the skin, she complained of slight pain, which being pierced, she scarcely felt them: after about ten minutes, I directed her to bend the knee slowly; to her surprise, flexion no longer caused pain, as it did previous to their introduction. The needles were then withdrawn with the same motion as inserted; not a drop of blood was lost; even the places of insertion could not be seen, and what was infinitely more important, the pain had vanished. A few minutes after, she complained of it at the inner side of the ankle, whence, after about the same lapse of time, it was routed as from the knee. The old woman was so delighted that she danced for joy. For several days she continued free from her old complaint, but after being again exposed to the exciting cause, damp weather, it was renewed. The experiment was not repeated.

Case II. A lady was subject to Rheumatic stiffness of the neck, after

exposure to a damp atmosphere, particularly at night. On one occasion I found her with her head so fixed, that rotation was impossible. After some persuasion, she consented to the introduction of the needles; of which two were inserted, one on each side of the vertebræ. As their points touched the posterior fasciculi of cervical nerves, she complained of an acute tingling sensation, like an electric shock, which induced me to retract the needles slightly. After about fifteen minutes, I requested her to make an effort to turn her head, which to her surprise she did, with no pain except that which arose from the pressure of the muscular fibres upon the points of the needles. The relief was prompt and permanent.

Case III. I had the misfortune some years since to luxate my left clavicle, in consequence of which I have been occasionally subject to Rheumatism of the deltoid muscle on getting wet. I have in repeated attacks laid bare the shoulder, and requesting some friend to keep the skin tense, introduced three needles around the shoulder. Previous to their introduction, I could not raise the arm to a horizontal direction, unless aided by the other hand, and suffering severely. The pain caused by the needle inserted into the anterior fibres of the muscle, was decidedly the most acute, evidently arising from the contiguity of the nerves which supply the arms. In fifteen minutes I was free from pain, and could move the arm with perfect ease, upon which the needles were withdrawn. Months elapsed before I experienced any return of the Rheumatism.

Case IV. An old seaman labored under entonic Rheumatism of the deltoid muscle; the shoulder was sensibly hot, but being a topical disease, at the request of the physician of the marine hospital, of which he was a patient, I consented to try acupuncture; he, like myself, could not elevate the humerus to a horizontal direction. The needles were introduced, and suffered to remain two hours; extraction was found extremely painful and difficult; the corks were detached, and it was necessary to thread the needles in order to extract them. Before insertion they were highly polished; after extraction they were blackened and deeply corroded completely *around* the portion at the surface of the skin; the imbedded portion, irregularly. It is well known that the nerves are expanded as a delicate net-work over the entire surface of the skin; it is also supposed that the nervous and galvanic fluids are identically the same. May not the greater abundance of this galvanic or nervous fluid at the surface, account for this more complete corrosion of that part of the needle? The pain was by no means removed; indeed he suffered so much from the extraction, that no persuasion could induce him to submit to any variation of the experiment. He was subsequently cured by other means.

Case V. A young man applied to me, to try the effect of acupuncture upon a chronic pain of the loins, which had been treated unsuccessfully by some of the most eminent physicians of Charleston; cupping, blistering, rubefaciants having all been tried with only temporary benefit. On the insertion of the second needle, if I mistake not, he fell back into my arms in a state of syncope. Having laid him on one side, I ex-

tracted the needles. He stated, after reviving, that it was not pain, but a sudden sickness, which caused him to faint. This uncommon symptom would have caused me some alarm, had I not previously met with such a case in a French Journal. I never could persuade him to repeat the experiment, although the lumbar pain was relieved for a few days.

These are a select few of many cases of Rheumatism which I have treated by acupuncture; they have led me to anticipate the following results, viz.

*In acute Rheumatism*, the needle acts as an irritant, and is therefore improper before inflammatory action has been reduced. The effect produced in case 4th, will be a lesson to me in future never to suffer the ordinary steel needles to remain for any length of time. Under those circumstances they should be made of gold or platina.

*In sub-acute Rheumatism*, I consider acupuncture a prompt and efficacious remedy. I frequently employ it, much to the surprise of my patients, from the trifling pain which it causes, and the promptness of relief; and equally to the astonishment of the attendants, who rarely have faith in the remedy, until proved by positive demonstration.

*In chronic Rheumatism*, acupuncture will relieve promptly and thoroughly, but the disease is liable to recur on the reapplication of the cause usually producing it.

It may be inferred from what has been stated, that I believe acupuncture to owe its efficacy to the transmission of the galvanic fluid. Such has long been my opinion, although I had no opportunity to ascertain the fact by the use of the battery. This point has been recently established by the experiments of Dr. Stokes, of the Meath Hospital, as republished from the London Medical and Surgical Journal into the American Journal, No. XXXIII, p. 225, et sequent. As this periodical is in general circulation, the reader will find the article referred to.

I consider acupuncture entitled to far more attention than it has yet received in the United States. *It is not painful.* I have never introduced the needle without the patient expressing the greatest surprise at the trifling degree of pain; indeed some have declared that if asleep it would not awake them. Of this I have some doubts. *It is not inconvenient.* Every house can furnish needles. *It is prompt and effectual.* I have never failed to produce the desired effect, in appropriate cases, within the space of a quarter of an hour; and in such cases the relief was permanent. I therefore repeat it as my opinion, that physicians have not duly appreciated its therapeutical efficacy.—*Southern Med. and Surg. Jour.*

## THE CÆSAREAN OPERATION PERFORMED TWICE, SUCCESSFULLY, ON THE SAME WOMAN.

BY ROBERT ESTEP, M.D. OF STARK CO. OHIO.

AUGUST 10th, 1830.—I had a hurried call to the wife of Geo. Stull, of Columbiana county. Found the patient of low stature, full habit, a bru-